

## Book Reviews

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NERVENLEIDEN UND ERZIEHUNG. By Prof. H. Oppenheim. S. Karger, Berlin, 1901, pp. 56.

This pamphlet of fifty pages is an address delivered before the Berlin Psychological Society. It is devoutly to be hoped that other neurologists will follow Oppenheim's example; accept invitations from associations of educated laymen, take this brochure as a basis for their remarks, and thus spread the gospel of proper hygiene for the nervous system where it will do the most good. After all, it is the parents and teachers, much more than the doctors, who have the opportunity to make or mar the neurotic child. But even in the profession there is cause for propaganda, and Oppenheim's address is warmly commended to general practitioners and to specialists.

In opening he states with positiveness almost amounting to assumption that the most important factor in the physical and mental health of an individual is his congenital tendency, and that this depends in the highest degree on the quality of the progenitors. To this he adds the very pertinent observation that the dividing line between the influences of heredity and environment is generally bridged by the circumstances that the very qualities of the progenitor which made the offspring degenerate, continue in operation during the rearing of the child. In other words, the parent who vitiates the fetus in conception still further damages the child in the rearing.

The subject naturally falls into several fundamental questions of which the most important are: To what extent may rearing counteract a congenital tendency to nervousness? What kind of bringing up aggravates such tendency? May the manner of rearing, in the absence of such tendency, of itself produce nervousness? These questions are not taken up *seriatim* but are answered in a general way in the succeeding text, as well as further questions as to what are and are not the important elements in training to prevent and cure nervousness.

The author first considers the toughening and hardening of the body, not only for physical and mental stress but for changes of temperature and other weather effects. Nervous persons are notoriously susceptible to all sorts of influences which in the nature of things assault the individual from birth to death. Especially is the child to be accustomed to pain and to endure it without yielding. No less than pain must various discomforts and disagreeable sensations be endured, and the child is not only to endure them but is to be taught to endure with relative indifference if in his riper years he is to enjoy comfort and happiness. Abnormal reaction to foul odors, bad tastes, disturbing sounds and distressing sights is to be combatted by means proper for developing healthy inhibition.

Even more important than the foregoing is development of such powers and qualities as control the emotions. Nothing could be more the reverse of rational than the advice of some few neurologists (Levillain), that the nervous person be carefully shielded from everything that excites the emotions. A training along the lines of

Buddhism which would protect the growing spirit even from the sight of pain, and withdraw it entirely from the knowledge of suffering and sorrow, is not the one to prepare the individual for his battle of life and arm him against all the influences that threaten the nervous system.

Among the emotions fear, in its various forms, and anger, in its various degrees, are especially mentioned, also the potency of "judicious neglect" at critical moments. In relation to the foregoing points the author aptly calls attention to the fact that the planned training of the child is often nullified by carelessness of parents, nurses and others. Without design various emotions and obliquities are encouraged by incidental behaviour of older persons. Instruction is made negatory by imitation.

Next is attacked the much more difficult problem of how to properly train the higher faculties and more refined susceptibilities, and the author finds in symmetrical but not premature development of these a yeoman safeguard against nervousness. A consideration of religious and ethical training closes with the conclusion that "everything that goes to build character and make the will strong and true, conduces to nervous health."

Simplicity of life, few wants, few luxuries, pleasure in work, love of nature, all conduce to a healthy nervous system. Enjoyment of art, music, poetry, fiction and even more solid literature is not to be encouraged too early. Stimulation of the ambition, pride and vanity of nervous children in school work is roundly condemned and some of the calamities of such a course enumerated. The subject of sexual dangers and irregularities is touched with a master hand, but nothing new is presented, and the conclusions are such as would be reached by every neurologist of standing.

PATRICK.

ANLEITUNG BEIM STUDIUM DES BAUES DER NERVÖSEN CENTRALORGANE IM GESUNDEN UND KRANKEN ZUSTANDE. Von Dr. Heinrich Obersteiner, K.K.O.O., Professor, Vorstand des Neurologischen Institutes an der Universität zu Wien. Vierte, vermehrte und umbearbeitete Auflage. Franz Deuticke, Leipzig und Wien.

It is now fourteen years since the first edition of Obersteiner was put forth and it has claimed its position as a classic since its issue. Most of our readers are thoroughly aware of the practical character of this work and it would be a work of supererogation to point out its many points of excellence. In its new edition, however, it may be remarked that it has been almost entirely rewritten, a course rendered necessary by the many advances in the knowledge of the anatomy of the nervous system which have been made during the past five years.

It is not to be wondered at that all of the material gathered during this fruitful epoch should not have been included in this edition. To have endeavored to incorporate all the results of the nerve investigations would have resulted in the manufacture of a great neurological patch-work. Happily Obersteiner has avoided this and has given us a rewritten and thorough revision of his well-known work, thoroughly abreast of the modern period.

SMITH.